

Bodhi Leaf Publication No. 149

In the Presence of Nibbāna

Ajahn Brahmavaṃso



BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

In the Presence of Nibbāna

By

Ajahn Brahmavaṃso

Buddhist Publication Society
Kandy • Sri Lanka

Bodhi Leaves No. 149

First published: 1999

BPS Online Edition © (2014)

Digital Transcription Source: BPS and Access to
Insight Transcription Project

For free distribution. This work may be republished, reformatted, reprinted and redistributed in any medium. However, any such republication and redistribution is to be made available to the public on a free and unrestricted basis, and translations and

other derivative works are to be clearly marked as such.

In the Presence of Nibbāna

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa

Homage to the Blessed One, Accomplished and Fully
Enlightened

In the Vicinity of Nibbāna

Right now, those of us who are Buddhist monks and nuns, and those who are serious lay practitioners, are in the vicinity of Nibbāna. Being in this situation, we should recall that we are practising in precisely the same way that men and women, young and old, have been practising for the last twenty-five centuries, and eventually we too will achieve the same results. We are in the presence of Nibbāna in the sense that we have taken up the practice that is conducive to Nibbāna.

Sometimes it is hard to realise how close it can be. One doesn't realise that all we have to do is turn our head, to make just a slight change in our way of looking at things, to open ourselves up to the same

truth that the Buddha saw—the same truth that Venerables Sāriputta, Mahāmoggallāna, Mahākassapa, Ānanda, Anuruddha and all the other great arahants of the last twenty-five centuries have seen. It was there then, it is here now.

We should recall this frequently: recall that there have been thousands, even tens of thousands of arahants in the past, and that there will be many hundreds, thousands, even tens of thousands of arahants in the future.

One of the most meaningful stanzas in the Dhammapada is verse 372:

*Natthi jhānaṃ apaññassa,
Paññā natthi ajhāyato;
Yamhi jhānañ ca paññā ca,
Sa ve Nibbānasantike.*

There is no jhāna without wisdom,
There is no wisdom without jhāna.
One who has jhāna and wisdom,
He is in the vicinity of Nibbāna.

This path is still available, and when the path is available, so are the fruits. There is a book called *A Manual of a Mystic*, an obscure old treatise on meditation found in a monastery in Sri Lanka many decades ago. [1] Part of the meditation practice

described in it is just the above recollection, the recollection of all the arahants who achieved the sublime bliss of Nibbāna in the past. And now, here you are, embarking on the same journey, doing the same things, which must give rise to the same fruits. This was the Buddha's promise. He said that this Dhamma leads one way and one way only: to Nibbāna. If you can get into the stream, it will sweep you all the way down to the sea.

Such recollections, done frequently, give rise to great joy, happiness, and confidence. They give rise to faith in this practice which we call Buddhism, the Dhamma. This faith in turn gives rise to energy, so that we can have the will—the sustained will—to do what is necessary to transform our initial glimmer of faith into sustained realisation.

You are in the presence of Nibbāna every time you open up one of the books of the Tipiṭaka and read the teachings of the Buddha. You are in the presence of Nibbāna because there is just a thin veil between you and the Dhamma. When the Buddha taught these teachings to monks like Venerable Bāhiya (Udāna 1:10), just the teachings alone were enough to give people of that calibre great insight, insight which closed the gap between them and Nibbāna. They were not just in the presence of Nibbāna; they made that one step further into Nibbāna, into the full realisation

of Nibbāna.

Venerable Bāhiya and others like him probably never imagined that they were so close to such a marvellous and sublime state, yet they became great disciples of the Buddha. Indeed, when people look through the glasses of delusion, they often think: “How could someone like me ever gain this sublime bliss of Nibbāna? How could I ever attain a jhāna? How could one like me ever penetrate such a deep and profound Dhamma?” But the Buddha said that you can! You can because you already have the confidence and faith to take up the brown robe of Lord Buddha or to practise his teachings earnestly as a lay person.

Lending an Ear

An important aspect of the path, in addition to virtue and good conduct, is the study of the Buddha’s teachings. The Buddha put it very beautifully in his discourses: one lends an ear, bends the ear, listens with interest, and applies the mind, so that what one hears can enter deep within the mind and settle there. As it settles, over the weeks, months and years, it will grow and bear fruit. One day this fruit will be so sweet, the fruit of Enlightenment.

As one lends an ear to the Dhamma, contemplating

it, and allowing it to sweep over the mind like a beautiful breeze on a warm day, allowing it to soak in and to penetrate deep into the mind, it penetrates deeper than thought, deeper than the intellect, far deeper than the fault-finding mind, and far, far deeper than the familiar mind. The Dhamma penetrates into that part of the mind that one has yet to know—waiting there, waiting until, through the practice of meditation, one enters those very refined, beautiful, and subtle states of mind where these seeds of the Dhamma are resting, waiting to bear fruit, waiting to give the bliss of Enlightenment.

One has faith and confidence because one knows that others have realised this in the past. Sometimes people think that the great masters, the great monks and nuns of old, were somehow supermen and superwomen. But many of them started off as no different from most practitioners today. Sometimes the most unlikely candidates became the greatest saints. They took up the training to the best of their abilities; they persevered in their attempts to get hold of the mind and to calm it, to lead it to one-pointedness, to stillness. Then one day, through the accumulation of all their effort, the accumulation of all their practice of virtue, the accumulation of meditation—sometimes nodding meditation and sometimes scattered meditation—through the accumulation of

their learning, and of their reflections, and of their small insights, they eventually succeeded in breaking through the barriers that separated them from their goal.

One Drop at a Time

The Buddha compares the practice of the Dhamma to a pot filling up one drop at a time. There comes the moment when just one more drop falls into the pot, and then the pot overflows: the Dhamma is seen. One never knows when the time for that last drop to fall has arrived. The ordinary, unenlightened individual can never see this pot getting filled because it is in a part of the mind to which he or she as yet has no access—but little by little it is getting filled. One day it will become completely full, and it will spill over into the mind as you know it now, and then lead one into the source, into this innermost mind, which is usually hidden by the defilements and the hindrances. This is when one starts to see the source, which the Buddha called 'the housebuilder', the creator of birth and suffering.

So, whether you are a monastic or one with lay precepts, you should never give up the effort, never give up the training. This is a theme that runs throughout the Buddha's teachings. If one gives up

the training in virtue, meditation and wisdom, one has no chance of success. But if one continues with the training, if one continues following the Buddha's instructions, one will find that this training leads in only one way. It leads to Nibbāna.

This message is beautifully encapsulated in some of the best advice I ever got, given me by from a highly respected monk in Sri Lanka. It is a piece of advice I always value and keep in mind. He told me that at the end of each day, it doesn't matter so much what stage one has attained, or what one has achieved. What really matters is whether one has really practised to the limit of one's ability that day—whether one has really tried one's best—or instead has been slack and heedless, forgetting the Buddha's teachings, and forgetting one's faith that these teachings actually lead to Nibbāna. If at the end of the day you look back and know that you have tried your best, then you are accumulating spiritual qualities, you are getting inwardly filled with these precious drops of water, and drawing closer to the goal. By continuing in this way, it will happen, and must happen, that Enlightenment will come as well. This reflection is a means of developing faith in the Buddha's teachings.

The Buddha not only encouraged faith using the metaphoric 'carrot'—the encouragement, incitement and reassurance that this path produces fruit; he also

used the metaphoric 'stick'. The stick is just reflecting and wisely seeing the consequences of going the wrong way—into the realm of craving and desire, of disappointment and frustration; into the realm of suffering; into the realm of more births—and uncertain births at that. Uncertain births produce uncertain results, sometimes with great suffering and torment.

That is enough of a stick because it gives a sense of wholesome fear (*ottappa*), the fear of the consequences of not continuing to make an effort, of not continuing to walk this path, of not continuing to progress as far as your ability allows. It doesn't matter where you are on the path as long as you are stepping forward, as long as every day another drop falls, filling up that great jar inside yourself. If you are doing that, then you are in the presence of *Nibbāna*, in the sense that you are walking the path that leads to *Nibbāna*.

Virtue

The Buddha and the Noble Ones always say that that path is the Noble Eightfold Path—the Path of virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). To walk the path of virtue means that you will not harm any living being. One dwells with a mind intent on the happiness of all beings—that softness of mind

concerned with the welfare of all beings wherever they may be, including oneself. That virtue has to be perfected. It is not enough to have 90% virtue, or 95% virtue, or even 99% virtue. One's virtue must be fully purified, purified, first of all, by faith.

The Buddha said that virtue is the foundation of the Path. Virtue is the ground on which rest the higher aspects and factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. If this part of the path is weak, if one takes liberties with one's virtue and bends the rules, then it's going to weaken concentration and create impediments to the arising of wisdom. Thus out of faith and trust in the Buddha's teachings, and in the teachings of all the great monks and nuns one knows about, one resolves in a place which is deeper than the defilements, "I shall uphold these precepts as if they were a golden casket full of jewels; I shall hold them up to my head; I shall value them and protect them. These are of the Buddha."

One famous meditation teacher used to tell his monk disciples that they should look after their alms-bowls as if the bowls were the Buddha's head. One should regard virtue as what is on top of the Buddha's head, or even higher. One should hold it in such reverence and value it so much that one would not dare to deliberately go against any advice or pronouncement coming from Lord Buddha.

Eventually, as one develops greater concentration and wisdom, one's faith and confidence in the Buddha's teaching grow to the extent that one would not transgress these precepts even for the sake of life. It becomes almost impossible to do so. The mind values them so highly because they come from the Tathāgata, because they lead to Nibbāna, and because, by empowering the mind to achieve concentration, they open up the door for wisdom to enter.

At first, one just has ordinary confidence and faith. But with each realisation and with each deep insight, one's confidence and faith are transformed—not into love or worship, but into something higher and deeper than that. They are transformed into an enormous respect for that which is the highest of all. As it is said in the Ratana Sutta: *Na tena dhammena samatthi kiñci*—There is nothing equal to this Dhamma (Suttanipāta v. 225). Once one realises that the Dhamma is more valuable than anything else in the whole world, one would never transgress, damage, devalue or demean virtue.

As virtue becomes strong in the practitioner, concentration happens by itself. It happens simply because the mind becomes pure. To become pure means to become free from defilements. It is actions that defile the mind, actions of body and speech, and also the thoughts which precede visible actions. The

practice of virtue means getting hold of the mind that is being defiled by habitual patterns of unskilful reactions, the reactions of a crazy person, the reactions of a person who just cannot see. The mind is covered up with 'grease' and 'dust' so it cannot really see its own welfare. The practice of virtue is the first shining and cleaning up of the mind, wiping away the accumulated dust and grime of many lifetimes.

Those beings who walk in virtue, who speak and act kindly and wisely, seem to have nothing threatening or harmful about them. They radiate a beauty, a magnetic attraction, which comes from the inner happiness they experience through their unblemished virtue. Each practitioner of this path should know that happiness, but it will only be known if it is pointed out. If a virtuous person takes the time to look into his or her mind, to turn the apparatus of perception inward, he or she will see that their virtue is very pure, the virtue of the Buddha, and thus will gain more faith and confidence in the Buddha's teachings.

On this path towards Enlightenment one passes through different stages, and each of those stages brings its own happiness. These happy feelings are little confirmations that this path is leading in the right direction. They give encouragement, and one can ask, "If this is the happiness I have achieved so far, what is the happiness awaiting me at the next stage?" Be

warned, however, that the defilements make one turn away from what is pure towards what is impure. One should make a deliberate effort to notice that pure, subtle and refined happiness born of an unblemished lifestyle, a life of harmlessness.

Maybe you consider your virtue to be as yet imperfect. But enough perfection is there; enough days and hours are spent in such a pure livelihood, pure speech and pure action, that you should notice the result is an unblemished inward happiness. Turn to that; recognise it, and you will affirm it. This will give you extra confidence in the Buddha's teachings about the mind and about right practice of body and speech.

Sense Restraint

As one develops virtue and the restraint born of virtuous conduct, one realises that the way to achieve perfection in virtue is by restraining the senses. One has to restrain oneself in speaking, looking, and listening. Why listen to every conversation around you? "What did they say? What are they doing?" It doesn't concern you. It is much more beneficial to turn away from the conversations of the world, to turn away from the activities of people. One doesn't even look at what is happening outside; instead, one looks and listens to the activities inside oneself. This is what

is called restraint. Instead of the senses turning outside, they start to turn inside and 'look' at their own activity.

As the senses become more restrained, one starts to experience one of the first stages of the happiness born of peace, the happiness born of restraint, the happiness born when the mind is starting to experience calm. The senses are being quietened down; for one is guarding them. What are they being guarded from? They are being guarded from involvement in the world, which tends to excite and disturb our minds.

The Buddha said that if one practises sense restraint one will experience a very pleasurable, pure and beautiful result—a quiet, peaceful and settled happiness. Those who practise seriously, and particularly those who live and practise in quiet places, should be able to realise this delightful state of peace. One should reflect and notice that happiness.

One is following the Buddha's teachings by delighting in wholesome states of mind. It is only unwise and unprofitable to delight in unwholesome states, in the satisfactions of the world of the five senses. That is where the Buddha said one will find danger. But as for the peace and happiness born of pure virtue and pure sense restraint, delight in it,

enjoy it, indulge in it and celebrate it. Do it out of faith in the Lord Buddha.

Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension

In the gradual training, sense restraint first gives rise to mindfulness and clear comprehension. Here the mind starts to feel its first experience of being in control, of being at the helm. Usually in our lives the senses are in control, and we have no freedom. As soon as there is a delightful object, straightaway the senses go to it. When an attractive person of the opposite sex passes by, the eyes go in that direction. As soon as a nice smell drifts up from the kitchen, the nose goes to it. As soon as there is an interesting conversation or pleasant music, the ears go straight to it. The senses are in control, not the mind, not wisdom.

However, when one develops self-control by guarding the senses, mindfulness finds room to grow. The mind acquires the power to know what is really going on, to direct attention to what is skilful and useful, and to resist getting lost in pointless entanglements and compulsive activities. When sense restraint gives rise to this mindfulness and clear comprehension, one starts to develop the foundation for the marvellous states of concentration where at last one sees the mind clearly for what it truly is.

Concentration and Insight: Whatever You Think It Is, It's Something Else

In the suttas, we sometimes come across little phrases of great significance. One such phrase is: “Whatever you imagine it to be, it is always something else.” [2] This is one of the most profound descriptions of the Dhamma we can find. Whatever one conceives it to be, it is going to be something else. It is as true for jhāna and insight as it is for Nibbāna itself. After having experienced one of these states, one realises how completely different the experience actually is from what you thought, read and expected it to be.

The conceptual mind cannot reach these refined aspects of mind. All the concepts in the world are just built up from the bricks of one's worldly experience. How could such a crude and coarse apparatus as the conceptual mind reach these states? This is good to remember; because it takes away one's trust and confidence in the conceptual mind. We tend to put far too much trust in our ability to conceive, so much so that we waste our time arguing about concepts, about who is right and who is wrong, instead of actually embarking upon the practice that will enable us to see and know the truth beyond concepts.

Out of faith in Lord Buddha, one's job and duty is to

use that conceptual mind where it is appropriate, and drop it where it has no place, where it does not reach, where it does not belong. Where it does not belong is in the realm of those states that are beyond ordinary human experience (*uttarimanussadhamma*): the jhānas, the states of insight, and Nibbāna. Here the conceptual mind has to be dropped.

But first of all, this has to be taken on faith—faith in the teachings of the Buddha and the Noble Disciples. What I mean by faith is that one values the teachings of the Buddha so much that one allows them to go inside the mind. One day, when one is close to concentration or insight, those teachings will bear fruit, and one will give up the conceptual mind.

That which creates conceptual entanglement is called diversification (*papañca*), a coarser form of craving. Having given up *papañca*, the mind becomes still and peaceful; one gets beyond the veil, behind the cause of the problem. One could say that the language of the 'self', the ego, is these thoughts and concepts, and the only way one can see this ego is to first make it shut up.

So one doubts this conceptual mind and instead one develops the mind of faith in the Buddha's teaching, which says that this path can lead in one way only. The conceptual mind might say, "I can't do it, it's too

hard for me.” But that’s just the talk of the ego getting scared, the talk of Māra, [3] who is on the defensive, rattled by our progress on the path to Nibbāna. Instead of believing in the conceptual mind, the mind of Māra, one trusts the word of the Buddha and the advice of the Noble Disciples. One puts aside those conceptual doubts, lets them go, and pushes them away. One goes beyond them, and finds that the Buddha was wise and enlightened: he did teach the Dhamma, and that Dhamma works. This is especially clear when the mind becomes peaceful.

Push out the conceptual mind and arouse the mind of faith. Let go. Let go of the ordering, the assessing of the situation, and the thinking of what to do next. Let the Dhamma take over; let the natural course of the practice take over. If you have been practising virtue, sense restraint, and mindfulness, you have the basis for concentration; so let go and let concentration happen. Allow the mind just to concentrate, to revert to what we might call its natural state—the seeking of satisfaction and comfort within itself rather than outside.

The mind then becomes self-sufficient, self-comforting and self-sustaining, so that the door from the mind to the five external senses is cut off, and the mind does not go out to the five senses. Instead it remains immersed in itself, in radiant joy. One

experiences this, delights in it, and it is wise and good to delight in it. One has faith in the Buddha, who said that this delight has no underlying tendencies to craving and lust.

The Beginnings of Craving

Just as one leaves these states of concentration, one can experience the beginnings of craving, the beginnings of the mind going out to seek satisfaction. As an arm reaches out for a cup of tea (or whatever it thinks to be joy), one sees how stupid that craving is. Craving has its measure of delight: the anticipation, the joy of activity, the doing, making, becoming, controlling. But this is delusive joy. One sees craving going out and also sees its results.

When one is developing insight based on these powerful states of concentration, something like craving, instead of appearing as an idea or concept, appears like an animal or creature emerging from the mind and going out. One sees this very clearly; also one can very clearly understand the dangers. The coarse mind can see only what is coarse and superficial. The subtle mind, however, can see the subtle.

One understands the very source and essence of craving: why it works, why the mind delights in it,

and the consequences of that delighting. Then the mind can develop repulsion towards craving itself, repulsion to these 'animals' who emerge from the mind and go out promising happiness and joy, but afterwards come back to bite and torment the mind. Craving is unfaithful to its promise; it promises delight, happiness, satisfaction and contentment, but in the end brings only torment and disappointment. The refined mind can see this.

The refined mind can see where this craving first originates. It first originates in the delusion of 'I' and in the delusion of 'mine'. It is the delusion of a 'self' (*attā*) which needs joy and satisfaction in the first place. This sense of self, this sense of 'I', is the source of craving, and it is not going to be uncovered easily as it lies very deep within. One needs the powerful, refined and subtle mind even to be able to come close to the source and meaning of self, or rather that which we take to be self. This is a very hard thing to see, but with faith and confidence in the Buddha's teachings, and by following them, one comes closer and closer.

Once one sees the self, or rather what we take to be the self, then one can truly say that one is in the presence of Nibbāna. One sees the self as just a mirage, something that has deceived the mind for so many lifetimes. One 'sees' this not as a concept, but as a very refined state that is very hard to describe to others.

Language doesn't reach to these places.

Once that self is seen, the delusion is destroyed and the very ground from which craving originates is pulled away. Craving is then like a bird with no place to rest anymore. It can still go on flying in the sky, but it can't come back to rest on any branch or ground. Eventually it will get tired, and then it will die. Once the mind sees these things—the Dhamma, the origination of all things, where they lead to, the nature of the mind and the nature of delusion—faith is transformed into wisdom. It is transformed into the experience of the Dhamma, into enlightening and powerful wisdom.

Many may wonder how anyone can gain such refined wisdom. But those who have faith in the Buddha know that there is a path, there is a way, by which human beings can gain this wisdom. That way is the Noble Eightfold Path. From the very beginning to the end it is not that long; it doesn't take that much time. One just needs the patience and the energy born of confidence.

If that energy comes from a sense of 'self', it is not going to be very productive. If the energy one arouses for one's practice comes from a sense of 'me' and 'mine', for instance, because we're ashamed of what we have done so far and want to do better, it won't be

anywhere near as effective as it would be if it comes from faith in the Buddha's teachings. If it is energy born of faith, it is not energy coming from the 'self', it is energy coming from the Buddha. If it is faith in the Dhamma, or if it is faith in the Noble (*Ariya*) Sangha, it is energy born of the Dhamma, energy born of the Sangha—the Ariya Sangha. If one hears a great discourse from one of the Noble Ones, it gives rise to faith, and that faith gives rise to energy. It is born from the Ariyas, from the Noble Ones. It is that energy, powerful and penetrative, that can arouse one to make one's virtue spotless, that can perfect one's sense restraint, sharpen one's mindfulness, and bring the mind to concentration.

“Whether you like it or not, it happens”: Whether you think that jhāna is the path to Nibbāna or not, you get into jhāna. It is a natural part of the Noble Eightfold Path, and it happens by itself. Planning it or not planning it is just getting in the way and putting off its happening. The experience of jhāna comes naturally to a mind in which the hindrances have been suppressed; in which faith has been developed; in which purity of virtue has been developed; in which sense restraint has been developed; in which mindfulness has been developed. Whether one likes it or not, whether one decides for it or not, the happiness ushered in by all these preparatory practices will

naturally give rise to the beautiful jhānas.

The Bliss of Enlightenment

The Buddha called the jhānas 'the bliss of Enlightenment'. [4] They are not the true release of Enlightenment, but close enough in their affective qualities to give one a taste of freedom. These are also called freedom of the mind (*cetovimutti*). They are the first real experiences of freedom for the meditator. One is getting a taste of what Nibbāna truly is. The mind has calmed down, the defilements are gone—though only temporarily—and one experiences a mind without defilements, which is just 'inside of itself'. One experiences contentment, a place where craving doesn't reach, a place where Māra is blindfolded.

The experience of these beautiful states that the Buddha described gives an indication of what Nibbāna is like. Then one doesn't need to worry about faith any more. The experience is there and, once there, the faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha are 'gone to greatness' (*mahaggata*). If the meditator has that last bit of confidence to turn the attention where the Buddha said to turn it at such a time, he or she starts to uncover the mirage of 'self', that which one has always taken to be 'me' or 'mine'. If one looks behind the screen at the source of the film, the light

and the projector itself, then one begins to see the Dhamma. As said earlier, one then starts to notice where the defilements originate from. The source of the hindrances, the mirage of self, is uncovered. It is this delusion (*avijjā*) that is the root cause of suffering.

Entering the Stream

If one uproots the mirage of self, and sees clearly with a mind beyond concepts, with a mind freed through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, then there will come with certainty the knowledge that one has entered the stream and is a stream-winner, bound for Enlightenment. There is no way that this can be turned back, and that is why they say that at this stage faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha becomes unshakable. It becomes so powerful, tall and great that there is no way in the world one might ever turn back.

Having realised the Dhamma, one can delight in it, delight in the achievement and in the uniqueness of the Buddha. With this realisation, one really knows what the Buddha is. As the Buddha said, “One who sees the Dhamma, sees me. One who sees me, sees the Dhamma” [5] That is a profound saying, and one needs to have actually seen the Dhamma to understand its meaning. In other words, if one has truly seen the Dhamma, then one will value the

Buddha, Dhamma, and Noble Sangha above all else. Confidence and faith in the Buddha reaches its peak and becomes an enormous source of joy and happiness—the bliss of pure confidence.

Faith is the source not only of energy but of happiness and delight (*sukha*) too. And again, it is a delight and happiness from which there is nothing to be blamed or feared. It is a pool from which one can drink, where there is no pollution and nothing to cause injury or illness. Thus faith is a powerful tool. It will take one from the beginning to the end of this realm of saṃsāra and eventually set one free.

Exhortation

As mentioned before, right in the beginning your faith may be weak and challenged by the defilements, but just notice, as you follow the Eightfold Path, how each stage gives rise to greater degrees of happiness. These experiences of happiness are real and are there to be turned to at any time if you will only notice them. They are like invisible companions that one takes for granted and often just doesn't notice. They will give increased faith that this practice works, and as that faith builds up, it will propel you along the path.

You are in the presence of Nibbāna because you are practising the Noble Eightfold Path. Confidence in this

truth might just enable the mind to accept that Nibbāna is only hidden behind the thinnest of veils. You might just get the incentive to go beyond and achieve jhāna, achieve insight, and become one of the Noble Ones. Then you will realise that it wasn't all that much, not all that difficult. Just go one step further into the mind and one step further behind the defences of the delusion of self.

Notes

1. Trans. by F.L. Woodward, ed. by Mrs. C.AF. Rhys Davids, Pali Text Society, 1982. [\[Back\]](#)
2. *Yena yena hi maññanti tato taṃ hoti aññathā*. See, e.g., Majjhima Nikāya No. 113 (III 42 foll.). [\[Back\]](#)
3. “Māra ... is the Buddhist ‘tempter’ figure. ... He appears in the texts both as a real person (i.e., as a deity) and as the personification of evil and passions, of the totality of worldly existence and of death.” Nyanatiloka Thera, *Buddhist Dictionary*, 4th rev. ed., BPS 1980, p.116. [\[Back\]](#)
4. *Sambodhisukha*. See, e.g., Laṭukikopama Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya No. 66 (M I 454). [\[Back\]](#)
5. Saṃyutta Nikāya 22:87 (S III 120) [\[Back\]](#)

Table of Contents

In the Presence of Nibbāna	2
In the Presence of Nibbāna	4
In the Vicinity of Nibbāna	4
Lending an Ear	7
One Drop at a Time	9
Virtue	11
Sense Restraint	15
Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension	17
Concentration and Insight: Whatever You Think It Is, It's Something Else	18
The Beginnings of Craving	21
The Bliss of Enlightenment	25
Entering the Stream	26
Exhortation	27
Notes	29